

## W A T E R   I N   T H E   W E S T

### CREDIT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES HELP FARMERS AND RANCHERS DEVELOP AND USE WATER RESOURCES IN THE WESTERN STATES

Inadequate and irregular rainfall is the greatest natural barrier the farmers and ranchers in many Western areas have to overcome. They must have adequate water and the facilities to use it efficiently if they are to farm successfully. They must know how to conserve it carefully and use it wisely.

Many farm families in these dry areas are producing far less than they could be producing if available water were fully developed and properly used on their land. Their incomes are correspondingly low.

The Federal Government has made funds available through the Department of Agriculture for the past several years to help Western farmers and ranchers make better use of the water resources they have.

For the 12 months from July 1, 1944, to June 30, 1945, Congress appropriated \$1,025,000 to carry out the provisions of the Water Facilities Act (approved by the President on August 28, 1937, and amended October 14, 1940) which provides for assistance to farmers in developing and utilizing water for farms and ranches.

The Farm Security Administration administers this program. Loans are made, and engineering and other technical services are offered to farmers and ranchers to help them repair and construct various kinds of water facilities.

#### Program Restricted to the Western States

The water facilities program is in operation only in the arid and semi-arid portions of these 17 Western States:

Arizona	Nebraska	South Dakota
California	Nevada	Texas
Colorado	New Mexico	Utah
Idaho	North Dakota	Washington
Kansas	Oklahoma	Wyoming
Montana	Oregon	

#### What Has Already Been Accomplished

Since the program was begun in 1938, more than 10,500 farmers and ranchers in the West have improved their farming operations through this service. Some have obtained individual loans and others have benefited by participating in associations which obtain loans to establish water improvements. More than 14,500 water facilities, affecting more than 3,880,000 acres of land, have been



completed or are now under construction. Experience has been gained which will be valuable in providing many more farm and ranch families with these services which they need to transform the richness of the land into flourishing crops and livestock.

A total of \$4,166,237 had been advanced in loan funds for water facilities from the beginning of the program through June 30, 1944. The demand for loans has come from nearly all parts of the West, as farmers and ranchers have learned of this means to improve the productive capacity of their lands. Besides their value in increasing the well-being of the family and the community, water facilities loans are a good investment from the strictly financial angle. Repayments on loans for this purpose on June 30, 1944, were equal to 10.5 percent of the total amount of principal that had come due.

#### The Emphasis This Year

Because of the scarcity of certain materials and equipment, the chief emphasis in the program this year is on repairing and keeping in use the water facilities already in existence. As materials and equipment become available, new water facilities are being installed in cases where they will help meet current needs for food production. In most cases, natural drainage area must be considered as a unit in any program for the use of water. However, in areas which are not designated for operations at the present time, requests for assistance will be given consideration. All counties in the 17 Western States are designated for loans for farmstead water facilities.

#### Kinds of Facilities

The program is designed for agriculture, and it includes only those types of water facilities which make it possible for farmers and ranchers to store or utilize water for livestock, farm gardens, crop and hay lands, ranges and pastures, or other lands used for agricultural purposes.

The Government offers farmers and ranchers assistance in building, installing, repairing and keeping in use the following kinds of facilities:

- Farm distribution systems
- Farmstead water
- Ponds
- Reservoirs
- Wells
- Conduits
- Detention, retention, and diversion dams
- Pump installations, including windmills
- Spring developments
- Water spreaders
- Stock water tanks
- Flood irrigation works and small irrigation, facilities, either for individual families or small groups of families
- Facilities for recharging underground reservoirs

A farm distribution system may be built in any authorized area where water is available to any individual farm for use in line with the over-all plan for



the area. The farmer may get help in building or repairing permanent laterals for the delivery and distribution of water essential to the farm irrigation system, and in building permanent structures such as turnouts, headgates, flumes, drops, etc., if they are needed.

Farmstead water means water for livestock near farm buildings, water for irrigating gardens of about one acre in size or smaller, and water for use in farm buildings. Farmstead water facilities do not include plumbing or plumbing fixtures inside farm buildings. Farmstead water projects can be carried out in every county of the 17 Western States.

The Farm Security Administration also makes loans under the Water Facilities Program for the purchase of water stock in companies or associations, if transfer of the water right will result in better use of the land. For example, transfer of water right may help prevent waste or inadequate use of water resources, or make it possible to use water on good land instead of on poor land.

#### Limits on Size of Facilities

The Water Facilities Act is intended to provide for a great number of small water facilities, and it is estimated that more than 90 percent of the facilities constructed under the program will cost less than \$1,000. But there are some cases where larger, more expensive facilities may be required. The Water Facilities Act, as amended, sets \$50,000 as the greatest amount of Federal funds that can be made available for a single facility.

#### Purpose of the Program

Funds for water facilities cannot be spent on a "hit or miss" basis. The funds are used to provide carefully planned water facilities in order to make the wisest use of land and water resources over a period of years, and thus to enable the people on the land to have a better living and fuller opportunity, and to add new wealth to their communities.

#### Planning Comes First

Careful planning is done before any work is started. In deciding on any water facility proposal, consideration is given to how the proposed development will affect the whole drainage basin. The Soil Conservation Service assists the Farm Security Administration in obtaining information bearing on the proposed water facility.

#### Program Is Limited to Agricultural Lands

The benefits of the program are extended only to bona fide farm and ranch operators--those whose lands are actually used for farming or grazing, and those who have lands that could be used profitably for farming or grazing if the necessary water could be supplied. The Water Facilities Act provides that water facilities cannot be located where they would encourage farmers to cultivate poor land areas that, in the public interest, should be devoted to other uses.



### Those Who May Receive Assistance

The Water Facilities Program is intended to help those farmers and ranchers of the West who cannot obtain adequate credit for this purpose from other sources. When a farmer can obtain a loan, at reasonable interest, from a bank or other agency, he would not be expected to use the funds Congress appropriates for loans to those who need water facilities but cannot get the credit to make such improvements. Each family receiving a loan is given technical assistance in constructing and installing the water facilities best suited to the farm. This technical assistance in planning and laying out water facilities projects is available to all farmers, even though they obtain their loan from another source, provided they are in areas where FSA operations crews and engineers are available.

### Tenants May Take Part

Tenant farmers, as well as land owners, may take part in the program.. A tenant must meet two requirements:

- (1) He must provide satisfactory security for the loan.
- (2) He must have a satisfactory lease which will enable him to bear his share of the cost of constructing the water facilities he needs.

### Water Facilities Benefit Private Ownership

Water facilities will be built only to benefit privately owned lands. They will not be installed on public lands except where such improvements are necessary to furnish a water supply for farm families living on non-Federal lands adjoining or nearby.

### Water Facilities for Group Use

Sometimes the most economical plan is to build or repair a water facility that can be used jointly by a number of farm families living near each other. When this is the case, operations for group use may be handled by a cooperative association, a mutual company, an irrigation district, a soil conservation district, or similar organization.

### Farmers and Ranchers Pay Part of the Cost

The farmer or rancher who benefits from the building of water facilities is required to pay as much of the cost as his circumstances will allow. The Farm Security Administration works with him to determine how much he can contribute, in terms of labor, teams, equipment, material, and so forth. The size of the water facilities loan is based on the estimated cost of completing the facility. In making a loan, the FSA accepts a promissory note and a mortgage on the security.

### Repayments on Loans

The number of years the loan may run depends on how long the water facility is expected to last and the time required to retire the loan, but it is never more than 20 years. The interest rate is 2 percent. Farmers are



more than 20 years. The interest rate is 3 percent. Borrowers are not expected to repay the Government for the engineering, legal, soil conservation, farm management and other technical services they receive, nor for the loan processing and collection services.

#### Borrowers Follow a Farm Plan

The FSA helps the borrower to work out individual farm management plans designed to put his land and water to best possible use and thus pave the way toward greater security for his family. The farmer makes the plan in cooperation with a representative of the FSA. The farmer works out his plan to provide for:

- (1) Efficient use of water and land.
- (2) A production schedule, including farm and home expenses and loan repayments.
- (3) Enough food for the family and enough food for the livestock.

#### Installation of Water Facilities

The farmer himself (or the cooperative association or other group) takes the responsibility for "getting the job done". He receives the loan money, makes the payments for materials and equipment when the work is done directly, or pays the contractor when work is done by contract. Representatives of the Farm Security Administration give supervision, technical guidance, and engineering service as needed.

#### How to Get Water Facilities Assistance

Farmers and ranchers of the 17 Western States can obtain further information and technical help from the County Supervisors of the Farm Security Administration. General inquiries regarding the program should be sent to the State Directors of the Farm Security Administration. Their names and addresses may be obtained from the County Supervisors.



